

have a more manageable span of control than with the 13 or 14 elements they have now.

With the improved communications and mobility they would have, the support platoon leader and his platoon sergeant would find their tasks, though still formidable, greatly simplified. The LCC Forward and Rear would smooth out and simplify planning and executing the requirements.

Finally, with these improvements the support platoon leader could more

easily keep track of his elements, and the S-4 would have several ways of transmitting and coordinating his requirements, each of which could take up the slack if one failed.

Although maintenance and mess requirements have been left out of this discussion, these key elements, with some imagination, could easily be integrated into this framework. The result should be a smoothly functioning logistical system that would be capable of meeting any and all demands that might be placed on it in the

fluid environment that characterizes mechanized operations.



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The Battalion S-4: Lessons Learned

CAPTAIN HAROLD E. RAUGH, JR.

The brilliant and audacious "Desert Fox," Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, showed his understanding of the importance of logistics in military operations when he said that "the bravest men can do nothing without guns," that guns can do nothing without plenty of ammunition, and "that neither guns nor ammunition are much use in mobile warfare unless there are vehicles with sufficient [fuel] to haul them around."

Seeing that the "bravest men" receive adequate supplies of weapons and ammunition — and all the other logistical support they need to defeat a determined enemy — is the primary duty of the infantry battalion S-4. Yet the position of S-4 is one of the least desired, least understood, and least appreciated.

Too many battalion commanders, for example, seem to put their best officers in other positions and to have no qualms about rotating their S-4s every three to four months. (Fortunately, most do change their opinions on the value of their S-4s eventually — once

they realize that supplying and moving units in a tactical environment is not accomplished at the stroke of a grease pencil.)

It would help matters, though, if they, and everyone else involved, understood the various functions of the battalion S-4 before getting into the position of dealing with him or needing him. And officers who are likely to be assigned the job themselves especially need to understand what they can expect to face.

DUTIES

The battalion S-4 is, of course, responsible for logistics; his primary function is to advise the commander on all logistical matters within the battalion. At that level, he is a logistical planner and coordinator, as well as an operator, and becomes directly involved in requisitioning, receiving, storing, and distributing supplies, or in providing transportation.

The duties of the S-4, in addition to

advising the commander on logistical matters, are these:

- Planning, coordinating, and supervising all matters pertaining to logistics within the battalion.
- Coordinating the logistical activities of all attached and supporting elements.
- Assisting subordinate commanders on logistical matters.
- Providing for control of the battalion trains.
- Submitting logistical reports as directed.
- Planning for area damage control.
- Preparing the logistics estimate and paragraph 4 (service support) of the operations order.
- Preparing a garrison and field (tactical) logistics SOP.

The S-4 also normally supervises the activities of the motor officer, the support platoon leader, and all the logistical support elements in the battalion.

When an officer takes an assignment as a battalion S-4, he usually has

had some logistical training. If he has not, he needs to learn quickly what an S-4 is supposed to do and what all his duties and responsibilities entail. The best place for him to start learning is with his battalion commander and battalion executive officer. From them he can find out how they perceive his job and its responsibilities as well as what they expect of him. The brigade S-4 can give him additional guidance, as can his division G-4 and division support command (DISCOM) personnel.

He should also locate and become familiar with logistics references — ARs, CTAs (Common Tables of Allowances), FMs (especially FM 10-14-2, Guide for the Battalion S-4), SBs, SCs, TOEs, TBs, TMs, and local SOPs. Also invaluable to the new S-4 are correspondence courses from the U.S. Army Quartermaster School, including the Quartermaster Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Supply Management Officer Course, and

particularly the Supply Staff Officer (S-4/G-4) Course.

One of the S-4's challenges is that in effect he works for six bosses: each company commander and the battalion commander. It is imperative, therefore, that he inculcate into the members of his section the strongest sense of duty to the companies and the infantrymen of the battalion — the cutting edge of the unit.

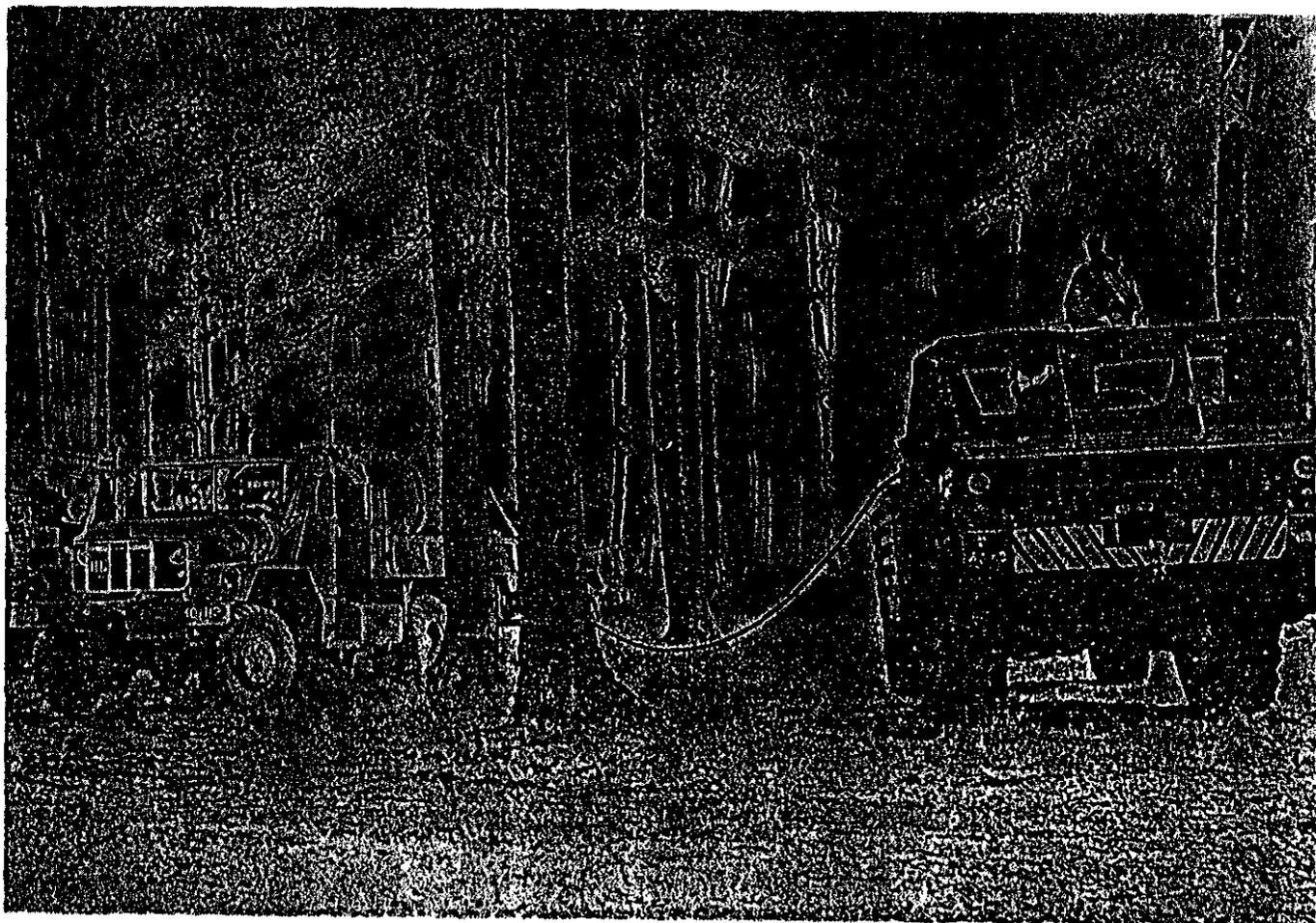
To do his job well, a battalion S-4 has to work regularly with many people at division level — the Division Property Book Officer, the Class II, IV, and VII accountable officer, and the area facilities engineer, for example. He will reap tremendous dividends in later transactions if he will meet with these people soon after assuming his duties and develop a sound working relationship with them.

In supervising the activities of the motor officer and the support platoon leader, one of his responsibilities,

together with the battalion commander and the executive officer, is to see that these officers are technically and tactically proficient in their duties. This may mean sending them to special courses, increasing their overlap time with their predecessors, or giving them individual tutoring. Whatever method is employed, this training is essential, and is particularly important for the support platoon leader, who has what may be the most important position for a lieutenant in the battalion—that of Class III (POL) and Class V (ammunition) Property Book Officer.

Because the S-4 rates the motor officer and the support platoon leader, he must counsel them regularly to point out any weaknesses in their job performances and to recommend solutions. Then he must give them enough time to improve before writing their evaluation reports.

The soldiers in his section, too, need special guidance. The S-4 should give



each of them specific duties in a written job description. He should also cross-train them as much as possible so that the section will stay efficient and effective even when key individuals are absent.

The S-4 also needs to evaluate his section's usefulness and to streamline operations as much as possible. In coordination with the company commanders and the unit supply officers, he must take the dominant role in seeing that all unit supply personnel are properly trained. And he should brief those officers who serve as report-of-survey officers on their responsibilities.

As the primary logistician in the battalion, the S-4 is ultimately responsible for helping all units earn at least "satisfactory" ratings on all their inspections, especially the annual general inspection. To accomplish this, he should serve as the focal point for coordinating inspections, courtesy or assistance visits — such as those by maintenance and assistance instruction teams (MAIT) — and all other assistance efforts rendered by units or staff agencies not organic to the battalion.

COMPETITION

To ensure that unit supply rooms maintain AGI standards (while continuing to provide outstanding support to the unit's soldiers), the S-4 can conduct a "Battalion Supply-Room-of-the-Month" competition. In such a competition, once a month each unit supply room in the battalion is inspected, with 10 percent of the AGI standards being used as the competition criteria. The completed DA Forms 2404, with discrepancies listed, are forwarded through the battalion commander to the company commanders for correction. The "best" supply room and its personnel are then rewarded accordingly. This way, over a one-year period, each unit supply room can be inspected on 120 percent of the AGI standards and requirements.

Another responsibility of the bat-

talion S-4 is administering the battalion's supply budget. Called TUFMIS (Tactical Unit Financial Management Information System), this budget involves \$300,000 to \$500,000 worth of general supplies (Classes II, IV, and VII) and of Class IX items each fiscal year. To allocate and control these funds effectively, the S-4 must have guidance and support from his battalion commander.

TACTICAL

In a tactical environment, the S-4 is responsible for all logistical support to the battalion. He personally organizes and controls the battalion combat trains (consisting of Class III, Class V, maintenance, and medical assets) and supervises the support platoon leader in controlling and supervising the activities of the battalion field trains. It is essential that resupply procedures in a tactical environment be standardized and that company executive officers be used to resupply units effectively and punctually. This field environment gives an S-4 a chance to be especially innovative, such as developing platoon Class IV barrier material packages to be delivered forward directly to the using unit.

In accomplishing all these tasks, the S-4 should keep a notebook that contains unit missions, section organization, duty descriptions, garrison and tactical SOPs, training guidance, and logistical points of contact. This kind of notebook can be indispensable not only to him but also to his successor, who will thus be given a head start on learning his job.

Throughout his tenure, the battalion S-4 should keep his superiors, as well as others who are affected by his actions, informed as to the progress and the current status of all ongoing projects and activities. He should constantly evaluate and reevaluate his activities, as well as those of his subordinates. Only then can he ensure that all of his soldiers receive the logistical support they need when they need it; that the battalion can deploy to any location at any time, ready to ac-

complish any mission; that 100 percent property accountability is maintained at all times; and that the S-4 section is always aware of its sole reason for existence — to serve the company commanders and their soldiers by providing all the logistical support they need.

Even though the battalion S-4 position is one of the least desired, understood, and appreciated of the staff positions, it is, nonetheless, one of the most important staff positions. At the battalion level, the S-4 is an operator as well as a logistical planner and coordinator and becomes directly involved in all logistical matters. An effective and efficient S-4, one who is also concerned for others, is worth his weight in gold.

One of the ablest senior commanders in World War II, Field Marshal Earl Wavell, recognized and emphasized the importance of battlefield logistics when he said:

The more I see of war, the more I realize how it all depends on administration and transportation . . . It takes little skill or imagination to see where you would like your army to be and when; it takes much knowledge and hard work to know where you can place your forces and whether you can maintain them there. A real knowledge of supply and movement factors must be the basis of every leader's plan; only then can he know how and when to take risks with those factors, and battles are won only by taking risks.

Field Marshal Wavell's advice is clearly worth following. Depending on our own individual position, we should all learn either how to be effective battalion S-4s or how to properly employ a battalion S-4. Above all else, we should all learn logistics. Our battlefield success will depend on it.



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